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Louisiana's WorkReady! Initiative In Spotlight At National ACT Meeting

Louisiana's employer-workforce connection initiative **WorkReady!** was in the national spotlight recently during ACT's annual meeting in Iowa City, Iowa. Dr. Lisa Smith-Vosper, Louisiana Board of Regents Assistant Commissioner for Accountability and Workforce Initiatives, was invited by ACT to serve as one of two keynote speakers for the workforce development session of their national conference. Her presentation focused on Louisiana's ongoing success with its **WorkReady!** Certificate program, the component of the overall workforce readiness initiative that certifies potential employees as "highly-qualified," according to performance on a national assessment called WorkKeys, designed by ACT. In this manner, Louisiana **WorkReady!** certifies that employees, students and job applicants have the skills required for the nearly 10,000 jobs in ACT's national WorkKeys database.

ACT, publisher of the well-known American College Test, is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides more than one hundred assessment, research, information, and program management services in the broad areas of education and workforce development.

Vosper informed ACT's Board of Directors and Advisory Boards that, like other states, Louisiana is suffering from significant skills gaps. The Louisiana **WorkReady!** Certificate program is destined to help bridge the gap between the current skills of Louisiana's workforce and the skills needed by prospective employers for current and future jobs. The program helps to arm job seekers for the workplace, signifying to an employer that a potential employee indeed has the skills needed for success in a given position. Candidates must take the WorkKeys core assessments and achieve specific scores to receive certificates. The program awards Gold, Silver

WorkReady!
ADD ONE

and Bronze **WorkReady!** Certificates to participants who achieve qualifying scores on the WorkKeys assessment.

“Research shows that more than 65 percent of the nation’s jobs require highly-skilled workers,” Vosper said. “An aggressive strategy to develop the workforce is not merely an option; it is critical to Louisiana’s economic viability.” She added that the Louisiana **WorkReady!** initiative and the certificate program are gaining support and national recognition, citing a conference hosted by Louisiana’s **WorkReady!** Interagency Collaborative this summer that drew 500 state, business and education leaders.

Louisiana **WorkReady!** is a statewide, cross-disciplinary effort involving representatives from the Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana Departments of Economic Development, Education, Labor, Public Safety and Corrections, the Workforce Commission, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Department of State Civil Service.

For more information on the program, contact Dr. Lisa Smith-Vosper at (225) 342-4253.